

Literary Pilgrimages at Home and Abroad

VI. What Remains of Dickens's London. In Three Parts.

II. The Strand and Lincoln's Inn Fields.

JUNE 9 is Charles Dickens's birthday, and Dickens loving Londoners commemorate it by various pilgrimages. Some of these pilgrimages are confined to city streets. Others, more ambitious, lead to Chigwell and the site of the Maypole Inn of "Barnaby Rudge" or to Gravesend and Rochester. The latter is a typical Dickens excursion. It involves a procession of charabancs, which, starting from the Golden Cross, go first to Westminster Abbey to place on the grave a wreath of the novelist's favorite pink geraniums, and then to the south side of the Thames by Westminster Bridge, across southeast London, over Blackheath and out through the Kentish hop fields to the Rochester, made immortal by the visit, on the 13th of May, 1827, of Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Tupman, Mr. Snodgrass, Mr. Winkle and their newly married friend, Mr. Alfred Jingle; chronicled again in "The Seven Poor Travelers," "The Old Curiosity Shop" and "Great Expectations," and, under the name of "Cloisterham," minutely described in the last story of all, the unfinished "The Mystery of Edwin Drood." An all day trip, and of course luncheon is at the "Bull," in the famous ballroom of "Pickwick," and of course there are ponderous speeches in the vein of "On Tom Hood's grave is written the legend 'He Sang the Song of the Shirt'; on Dickens's grave should be written 'He Set the Prisoners Free. He laughed the Fleet and the Marshalsea off the face of the earth. He ridiculed imprisonment for debt out of existence.'" Then the homeward journey by way of Gadshill, Cobham Park, the "Leather Bottle," and back through London.

But whatever the pilgrimage, it always starts from the Golden Cross in the Strand, a step from Trafalgar Square and diagonally opposite the Charing Cross Railway station, for the simple sentimental reason that it was from the Golden Cross that the Pickwickians and Mr. Jingle started in the Commodore coach nearly one hundred years ago. As a matter of fact, it was another Golden Cross which was upon the exact spot now occupied by the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square. But in the third decade of the last century there was no Trafalgar Square, no Column, no broad Northumberland avenue leading down to the banks of the Thames. The road known as Charing Cross connected the Strand with Cockspur street, and to the north was the open space called the King's Mews. The old Golden Cross being gone, pilgrims find the next best thing in its successor, which has something of the Dickens flavor, and which is the most convenient of spots at which to begin a Dickens pilgrimage.

The first stretch of the practical Dickens trail is one of memories and associations rather than material monuments. The way lies along the

Strand to St. Clements Danes and the Temple. Almost directly opposite the Golden Cross is Craven street, which since the days of Benjamin Franklin, who lived there, has been haunted by American visitors. At what was once 39 Craven street Mr. Brownlow of "Oliver Twist" resided after leaving Pentonville, and there the villain Monks, confronted, made full confession of guilt. Craven street is greatly changed, just as the adjoining land is changed, where the Charing Cross Station now frowns grimy and smoke smudged, on the site of the old Hungerford Market, at the back of which Dickens as a boy worked in a blacking factory. That factory he described in "David Copperfield," picturing David there toiling "as a laboring hind" in the services of Messrs. Murdstone & Grinby. In the second street beyond the station, in the house furthest from the Strand on the left, David subsequently lived. It was Mrs. Crupp's lodging house, and there David entertained Steerforth and Steerforth's two friends.

About the Adelphi Arches (Rudyard Kipling's *Otherwis* called them the "dark h'arches," and dreamed of them in India), through which young Dickens in his leisure hours so loved to roam, there still remains much of the old time flavor. Through them the way may be found to the corner of Adam and John streets, where, under the name of the Adelphi Hotel, there stands, practically unchanged, the hostelry that in Pickwick's day was known as Osborn's Hotel, where came Mr. Wardle, visiting London with his daughter, Emily, after Mr. Pickwick's release from the Fleet Prison. Mr. Snodgrass, calling while old Wardle was out, made timorous but successful love to Emily, concealed himself in Mr. Wardle's bedroom, was discovered by the fat boy and eventually accepted as a suitor and invited to sit down to dinner.

From the Adelphi region it is only a few minutes' walk along the Strand to the Temple. The Temple does not change; years are likely to elapse before it loses its quaintness and its air of strange solitude, and all about it the Dickens associations are vivid. Entering through the eastern arch, which gives on Goldsmith Buildings, we find the chambers of Mortimer Lightfoot and Eugene Wrayburn, of "Our Mutual Friend." To recall the words of the tale, "a dismal churchyard, dismal windows commanding that churchyard, and at the most dismal window of all a dismal boy." In Garden Court Pip of "Great Expectations" and his friend, Herbert Pocket, had residence. In the Paper Buildings, facing King's Bench Walk, Sir John Chester of "Barnaby Rudge" lived, and gave audience to Edward Chester, Hugh, Sim Tappertit and Gabriel Vardon. Here also, in what were called the Stryver Chambers, as related in "A Tale of Two Cities," Sidney Carton served as "jackal" to Mr. Stryver, King's Counsel. But most Dickensy of all in the Temple is Fountain Court, with its associations of Tom Pinch and Ruth Pinch of "Martin Chuzzlewit," and the adjoining Pump Court, where Tom found his mysterious employment and where old Martin revealed him-

self in his true character to the astonishment of Mr. Pecksniff. In Fountain Court Ruth went to meet her lover, and when John Westlock came at last, "merrily the fountain leaped and danced, and merrily the smiling dimples twinkled and expanded more and more, until they broke into a laugh at the basin's rim and vanished."

Directly opposite the Temple, where the Strand and Fleet street join, is Chancery Lane, leading northward in the direction of Lincoln's Inn Fields. This is "Bleak House" land. To Lincoln's Inn Hall came again and again all the harassed suitors concerned in the famous case of Jarndyce versus Jarndyce. At the corner, where Chichester Rents touch Star Yard, is the house where Krook came to his end by spontaneous combustion. Over on the west side of Lincoln's Inn Fields, at No. 58, is the structure which Dickens knew so well when it was the residence of his biographer, John Forster. When he came to write "Bleak House" he used the house as the home of Lawyer Tulkinghorn, and there he staged one of the most dramatic of all his murders. Incidentally the late F. Hopkinson Smith some years ago made a series of charming charcoal sketches which he had issued in book form with the title "Dickens's London." The Tulkinghorn house is a beautiful drawing. It has only one defect. Mr. Smith drew the wrong house.



No. 58 Lincoln's Inn Fields. John Forster's house and Lawyer Tulkinghorn's house in "Bleak House."

The Story of Ireland

THE STORY OF THE IRISH NATION. By Francis Hackett. The Century Company.

THE case against the Bolshevik regime in Russia (pretty well proved by this time) rests mainly upon three points: It confiscated property in land and factories in order to apply an economic doctrine that the Western world was convinced was individually unjust and socially impracticable. It acquired and retained its power largely by force of arms. It wiped out what rudiments of democracy there were in Russia and set up the rule of a class. Even the more rational of the Bolsheviks (like Lenin) appear lately to have conceded these things to be true.

The case against British rule in Ireland (which fortunately no longer needs to be argued) constituted a very close parallel: It achieved and maintained its ascendancy by confiscation of private property in land (on a scale that the Bolsheviks could hardly have surpassed had their field of operations been the same size), and thereby set up a type of economic dominion that the British Parliament under Gladstone, by passing the act for redistribution of the land among the peasants, admitted had been unjust and socially undesirable. It rested, of course, for most of the centuries it existed, upon force of arms. It hardly pretended, even since the advent of the era of representative government, to be anything but class rule, and by a class largely foreign, too. Nobody any longer disputes these facts.

Many an Englishman has made the nature of the relationship clear enough, among them H. G. Wells. In his novel, "Joan and Peter," he says that to Ulster the British Tories "owed their grip upon British politics, upon army, navy and education; they traded—nay! they existed—upon the open Irish sore. . . . The arming of Ulster to resist the decision of Parliament (in 1914) was incited from Great Britain, it was supported enthusiastically by the whole Unionist party. . . . It was not a genuine popular movement, it was an artificial movement for which the land owning church people of England and Ireland were chiefly responsible."

Now that Ireland is in a fair way to accept the very thoroughgoing type of self-government that the British Government (in which were incidentally some of the Tories who backed Carson) has offered, one may read a study like Mr. Hackett's with a little of the detachment and the sense of examining settled issues that characterizes ventures into history. The emotional heritage is still vigorous, of course, and it may be years before it subsides. But (let us hope) the conditions that intensified it have begun to be removed at last in a way that presages a genuine solution. The question of Ireland's right to self-rule is settled at

any rate; future difficulties will be of another sort.

Mr. Hackett has written a remarkably fine sketch of Irish history, particularly in its relation to Britain, from the earliest records—and even before—down to the signature of the Free State Treaty. He places much emphasis upon the original nature of the economic and political dominion established and continued by British Kings. He stresses the ruthlessness of the military conquests in days when it was not uncommon for a victor to finish off his work after a battle by slaughtering what remained of his opponents.

Coming down to modern times, Mr. Hackett thus summarizes the past and the reign of Henry VIII.: "The Irish question was now 350 years old. Without the existence or aid of a single Ulster Presbyterian or a single Southern Protestant, without the existence of one 'Scotch-Irishman,' the problem of an Irish nation was full grown in the reign of Henry VIII. With him, however, and with his comprehensive policy, commenced the Ireland that we know to-day. Modern landlordism sprang from his polity. So did the religious question. So did the administration of Ireland by non-Irishmen and anti-Irishmen. So did modern Irish patriotism."

Under Henry (who, it will be remembered, was of a rather confiscatory bent in England as well as in Ireland) the seizure of the land went on. It continued under James, John Morley has suggested that if any one wants to understand "Irish turbulence," he should "read the story how the O'Byrnes were by chicane, perjury, imprisonment, martial law, application of burning gridirons, branding irons and strappado, cheated out of their lands." All of which was of course perfectly legal—as the law was interpreted by Judges and Grand Juries that had no choice but to obey the King's will.

Cromwell, with Puritan thoroughness, after the battle of Drogheda in 1649, "being in the heat of action," as he put it (quoted by Mr. Hackett), "I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town." Roosevelt is quoted as writing: "It was Cromwell who not merely gave free rein to this ferocity but who inspired it. . . . Neither in morals nor in politics were these slaughters justifiable."

Cromwell was no slouch himself at the business of confiscation. "This Cromwellian settlement conveyed every acre in Ireland. Unless men could show that they had been right all the way through (anti-papist, anti-royalist, anti-Irish, but also pro-Parliamentarian and pro-English), they lost their shirts. Cripples, invalids, infants, old men and old women who failed to prove that they had borne arms for the Parliamentarians—all lost their land. . . . Eleven million acres were confiscated in all."

Thus the cause. And here is the

result: In 1836 a royal commission revealed the state of the people of Ireland, dispossessed of their land. Out of work and in distress there were 585,000 men with 1,800,000 dependents. Lord John Russell remarked that if these 2,385,000 (half the population of the island) were gradually moved into workhouses they could live in a "superior degree of comfort." And in 1846 there were 729,000 dead of starvation.

The later history of Ireland centers chiefly about the land question, which was ameliorated by the peasant purchase act, and about the demand for national government, which had now been granted.

Mr. Hackett does not commit himself on the Free State treaty. From this sketch one cannot tell whether he sides with Collins and Griffith or with De Valera.

Mr. Hackett is Irish and his story, at times impassioned, is always that of an Irishman who longs to see his country free. While some might prefer a more judicial and cold blooded study, such a one would be sure to lack the vigor and art that Mr. Hackett's possesses. One of our most discriminating literary critics, he writes as an artist. It is a delight to read such history; one wishes there were more of it. If there were, history would be far more widely read than it is to-day.

TOWARD THE GREAT PEACE. By Ralph Adams Cram. Boston: Marshall Jones Company.

THIS volume consists of a series of lectures concerned with the attainment of that "Great Peace" which the author hopes will ultimately follow upon the Great War. It is Dr. Cram's contention that the world stands to-day at the crossroads; that it is in a state of unstable equilibrium that threatens its social and moral ruin; that there is danger at any moment of "a chaos comparable only with that which came with the fall of classical civilization and for which five centuries were necessary for the process of recovery." At the basis of the present catastrophe is the suppression in modern times of the great body of free men originating during the Middle Ages; the rise of a non-producing bourgeoisie; and the creation of a submerged proletariat. Although society has been steadily developing for centuries, we have made too much of a fetish of evolution, and have been inclined to forget that a process of decay must follow naturally upon one of growth. In order to avert such decay, we must awaken more fully to spiritual values, must study more thoroughly the conditions of the past as well as of the present, and must develop an adequate working philosophy of life.

The present volume represents a scholarly and well reasoned attempt to arrive at such a philosophy of life from a consideration of the social, industrial, political, and religious problems confronting the world to-day.



"Merrily the fountain leaped and danced," Dickens's "Martin Chuzzlewit."